...Holding The Torch of Truth

THE BASICS OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

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Biblical Research holds the torch of truth (Ps 119:105) –
Dele Ilesanmi

Etymology and Concept of Research

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LESSONS COVERED IN THIS MODULE

Lesson 1: Etymology and Concept of Research
Lesson 2: Research Writing
Lesson 3: Citations
Lesson 4: Quotations
Lesson 5: Techniques of Footnoting
Lesson 6: Bibliography
Lesson 7: Thesis Proposal Techniques

LESSON 1

ETYMOLOGY AND CONCEPT OF RESEARCH

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS LESSON

Unit 1: Introduction
Unit 2: The Etymology of Research: A Conceptual Clarification
Unit 3: Conceptual Definition of Research
Unit 4: Conceptualisation of Biblical Research
Unit 5: Biblical Research as a Spiritual and Theological Inquiry
Unit 6: Principles Underlying Biblical Research
Unit 7: The Sources of Biblical Research

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION

God has given man the desire to know the truth and the ability to think and reason like Him,
and has provided means whereby he can develop his intellect, and research is one of the ways
to develop it. God has the repository power to make Himself known and unknown, searchable
and unsearchable. The Bible is the only single source of God's revelation to humanity that can
be considered reliable, valid, inerrant, and infallible. Thus, biblical inquiry methods help in no
small measure in the practice of biblical research to discover truth. Biblical research is a distinct
scholarly field of study, and its findings remain impeccable and watertight

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION CONT'D

The characteristics of research are reflective thinking, an analytic or logical review of literature on the topic of interest, careful planning and examination, close attention to detail, and strict adherence to established procedures. The purpose of research, whether non-experimental or experimental, according to Nicceta Davis (2007), is to contribute to the body of knowledge in a particular field of study, and that contribution of knowledge is designed to maximise the effectiveness of practice in the field. The discovery of knowledge is undertaken, whether, through qualitative research, such as a study of the underlying causes of sexual harassment among church leaders, or quantitative research, such as the study of the effects of prosperity messages on the spiritual lives of church members. But the discovery of true knowledge may take a different approach. Hence, the Biblical Research is unique. Researchers approach their studies in a systematic and orderly fashion. Key elements of research are the collection of data, the analysis of data collected, and interpretation of these data to establish facts.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION CONT'D

The Bible is the sole objective and primary source of all the revelations God has given us about Himself and His plan for humanity. The Bible contains a great deal of information about the natural world that has been confirmed by scientific observations and research. Some of these passages, among others, prove that science only confirms or discovers what has already been written in the Bible (Lev 17:11; Job 36:27–29; Ps 102:25–27; Eccl 1:6-7). The Bible is only God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16–17). Hence, the Word of God does not change with new discoveries, either scientific, philosophical, or any means of new discoveries. The Word of God, the Bible, is timely and changeless. This again makes Biblical Research a unique field of study.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION CONT'D

In biblical (educational) research or studies, the written word of God is approached in two quite different ways: spiritual (theological) epistemology and cognitive (intellectual) epistemology. Every biblical researcher must engage himself or herself in these two different epistemologies. However, the research pneumagogy (Holy Spirit-directed approach) must be adopted for a successful research work. If the researcher is to read, search, learn, preach, teach, and understand the Word of God rightly, the research epistemologies must be pneumagogically approached. The academic study of Scripture, the Bible, is never an end in itself; Christian teachers, scholars, and researchers pursue truth in order to grasp the truth, and to be transformed by it. The paucity of good teaching and preaching today reflects the failure of contemporary Christian teachers and preachers to reflect deeply on the theology of the Bible and engaging themselves in these two different epistemologies. Research conducted on the premise of human theories, philosophies, and ideologies without the Word of God cannot be regarded as quality and truth (Dele Alaba Ilesanmi, 2023).

UNIT 2
THE ETYMOLOGY OF RESEARCH: A CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

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THE ETYMOLOGY OF RESEARCH: A CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The origin of the word *research* can be traced to the Old French word, *recerchier,* meaning “to seek, to look for”. The Early Modern French word, *rechercher*, means “to examine closely”, is from Old French word, *recerchier.* Similarly, the word *research* is derived from the Middle French word, *recherche*, which means "to go about seeking", the term itself being derived from the Old French term, *recerchier,* a compound word from "re-" + "cerchier", or "sercher", meaning 'search'. The earliest recorded use of the term was in 1577. Thus, the word *research* has its roots in the Middle French language, precisely the verb "*rechercher,*" which means "to search again." This verb is derived from the Old French word, "re-," which means "again," and "*cerchier*," meaning "to search." Therefore, the word *research* initially referred to the “act of searching again or examining something more closely.”

“As time progressed, the meaning of "research" became more refined and specific. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the term was increasingly used to describe scientific and academic inquiries into various fields. During this time, the concept of "research" became increasingly important in the development of modern scientific methods and the establishment

Ogunniyi (1992, p.2, Citing Romberg 1975) describes research that: "The word Research has as its stem SEARCH, which means 'look for'. With the prefix 're' the word means to look for again; more carefully, more exhaustively. So, research involves looking for or examining something in a very careful, objective and exhaustive manner so as to develop a valid knowledge or understanding of that thing."

What we can deduce from the etymological meaning of *research* as explained above, is that, research means "to seek for", "to look for", "to search for", "to examine closely", "to go about seeking", or act of searching again or "examining something more closely", to consider, to inquire, etc. Indeed, if all these phrases mean research, research has its root in the Word of God, the Bible, because they are a Biblical phraseology. We can conclude, therefore, that research is a theological inquiry because it is a search after the truth of God (Matt 6:33); it is a biblical inquiry, using berean model (Act 17:11); (Prov 25:2; Eccl 1:13; 7:27; Matt 6:33; John 5:39; 7:52; 1Pet 1:10). It is a spiritual inquiry (Job 11:7; 1Cor 2:10); it is an epistemological inquiry (Prov 2:3-5); it is an inquiry (Matt 7:7); it is a scientific inquiry, which cannot lead to absolute truth but a miserable enterprise (Eccl 1:13).

UNIT 3

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

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The term “research”, though has several meanings, is aimed at finding out the truth about a phenomenon. Webster's dictionary, defines research as a "careful or diligent search", a "studious inquiry or examination" aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts. Coryn defines it as a truth-seeking activity, conducted and governed by individuals with a high level of proficiency or expertise that contributes to knowledge and that is aimed at describing or explaining the world.

Research has been conceptualised in several ways based on the

UNIT 3
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF RESEARCH Cont'd

Research has been conceptualised in several ways based on the worldviews of the researchers. Ilesanmi has collated different perspectives of authors on the meanings of research for our understanding:

1. According to Richard Adekoya (2016), "Research is an investigative enterprise aimed at either increase or revising current knowledge by discovering new facts". It also involves data gathering, data collation and data analysis in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.
2. Research is "the essence of scientific enterprise which uses a wide variety of paradigms" (NSTA, 1992).
3. According to Wikipedia Research is "creative and systematic work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge".
4. According to Payton (1979), Research is a systematic, formal, rigorous and precise process employed to gain solutions to problems or to discover and interpret new facts and relationships.
5. According to Kothari (2004), defines research as an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its development. He says that research can also be seen as a systematic approach concerning generalisations and formulation of a theory.

See Ilesanmi (2024) "Biblical Research: A Theological and Epistemology Inquiry" for more definitions

UNIT 3
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF RESEARCH -- Cont'd

To summarise all these definitions above, research, in simplest term, is a diligent search for truth to establish true knowledge. The questions that are begging for answers are: which knowledge and truth are we searching for? Knowledge of God or Satan? What is truth and where can we find the truth? Only biblical research has adequate answers to the questions of truth because, research, in biblical concept, is truth-seeking activity to uncover or discover the *revealed hidden truth* of God's word.

UNIT 4

CONCEPTUALISATION OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

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Biblical research are two different words, that is, “biblical” and “research”. The word biblical itself is derived from the word, “Bible” which in turn is the Anglicised form of the Greek word *biblia* (books) (Schoville, Keith N 1978:16-17). The Greek form, according to John Arierhi Ottuh (2014), is traceable to Byblos, the name of a Phoenician port city famed in antiquity for its commercial name *Gebal*. Since papyrus was derived from the earlier materials used by ancients, it was adopted for the Greek word for book. He opines that the use of the word “Bible” to signify a collection of *sacred books* is traceable to

UNIT 4

CONCEPTUALISATION OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH -- Cont'd

The biblical concept of research is replete with different words in Scripture. It uses the phrasal expressions as *research*, such as "to seek for", "to look for", "to search for", "to examine", "to consider", "to inquire", etc. If research is an inquiry, Matthew 7:7 epitomises, encapsulates, and construes the concept of biblical research. That is, research is about the three-letter word, "ASK": where letter "A" stands for "ASK", letter "S" stands for "SEEK", and letter "K" stands for "KNOCK". If the purpose of research is to discover the truth, the three words in Matthew 7:7: "ask", "seek", and "knock" are elements or components of biblical research to discover the truth. Thus, research is a command by God. Jesus says, "ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" (Matt 7:7). Thus, "to ask" here, is "to inquire or make an inquiry," "to seek" here means to "to search for", "try to find" or "look for", "to knock" here means to get access to *the revealed hidden truth* or to the mysteries of God's revelations. This requires that one must knock, a way of consistent seeking, at God's door to access His blessings, mysteries, or to get what you want in accordance with His will. Therefore, "to knock" here is an emphasis on "ask" and "seek". In summary, biblical research is about *asking for truth*, *seeking for truth*, and *knocking in for truth*. The concept of research in the Bible is well captured by Matthew as commanded by Jesus. The way the Bible uses words such as "studying", "searching or search", "knowing or know", "understand",

UNIT 4

CONCEPTUALISATION OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

– Cont'd

Biblical research is about a search for true knowledge. Nicceta Davis (2007) says that Words such as "search, consider, perceive, understand, and know that are found in the Bible, are rich with meaning in the original language". For example, he stresses words, such as *baqash (1245)* and *darash (1875)* suggest a diligent inquiry or searching or pursuit in worship or prayer. This seems to indicate the worshipper is seeking God. *Bin (995),* in the Hebrew language, includes meanings such as to discern, perceive, observe, pay attention to, understand, and to be intelligent. Davis says that the primary meaning of *bin* is understanding or insights. If this suggests the mere accumulation of data is not adequate, but superior knowledge and knowing how to use the information wisely is of greater importance. Another word is *Ylida (3045)* or knowledge, which encompasses the idea to perceive, understand, and acquire knowledge. It expresses a broad variety of meanings for various types of knowledge gained through the senses. It can also be referred to being acquainted or familiar with a person in a physically intimate or sexual way, or to being known, or reveal oneself, and

UNIT 4

CONCEPTUALISATION OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

Cont'd

Ilesanmi defined Biblical Research as "a truth-seeking spiritual activity to uncover or discover the revealed hidden truth of God's Word". He goes further to give a broad definition of biblical research as "a purposeful, systematic, and spiritual epistemological inquiry into the truth to uncover the *revealed hidden truth* of God's word as recorded in Scripture to establish and advance true wisdom, knowledge and understanding" (Deut 4:29; Job 11:7; Prov 25:2; Eccl 1:13; 7:25; Isa 34:16; Jer 29:13; Hos 10:12; Matt 7:7-8; Lk 711:5-10; John 5:39; 7:52; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 2:10; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; etc). It can also be seen as truth-seeking, evidence-based, epistemologically and theologically inquired research. What is more, in the Scriptures, we find references where believers studied, searched, or sought after knowledge to undergird their faith. For instance, the Bereans, who were more noble-minded than the those in Thessalonica, reportedly received the Word of God with all diligence and readiness of mind, and "search the Scripture daily" to find out the truth to see if the things they had been told were true. To search the Scripture to know the truth is a noble quality, an excellent quality that is expected of a good Christian. It is an honourable thing to search the Scripture or do research. The *Berean model of research* is an excellent one to discover and establish the truth.
The gospel of Luke opens with Luke saying he thought a perfect understanding of the things they believed was important. As a result, he carefully investigated everything that had been handed down from eyewitnesses, and then wrote down an orderly accounts or histories so that Theophilus could "know" the certainty of the things he had been taught. Luke states clearly that the main purpose of his inquiry or diligent investigation into the accounts or histories told

UNIT 4

CONCEPTUALISATION OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

Cont'd

Scientific research is most wide-spread and, perhaps, reliable type of research globally. People wrongly believe that everything must be proved scientifically. According to John Wesley Taylor V (2019):

"One of the more pervasive truth criteria is that of empirical evidence. This approach is frequently expressed in statements such as, 'It's supported by research' and "It's scientifically sound." Research, with its systematic methodology and its checks and balances, such as peer review and replication of findings, is certainly one of the more promising avenues through which we can approximate truth."

UNIT 4

CONCEPTUALISATION OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

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Scientific research has a lot of limitations. Scientific research is not absolute; scientific research is not an absolute, reliable way to discover the truth; scientific research cannot lead man to divine truth; scientific and other research types can only investigate the world around us but not the world beyond us. Researchers will be naïve if they do not recognise the limitations of research, particularly scientific research. Several of these limitations are highlighted in the Bible. We need biblical research to unlock the mysteries of God, that is, *the revealed hidden truth* of God. Indeed, a careful application of scientific inquiry is not a guarantee of truth. we recognize that we cannot arrive at certainty based on empirical data. We can never state, "Research has proved that . . ." or "Science has verified that . . .

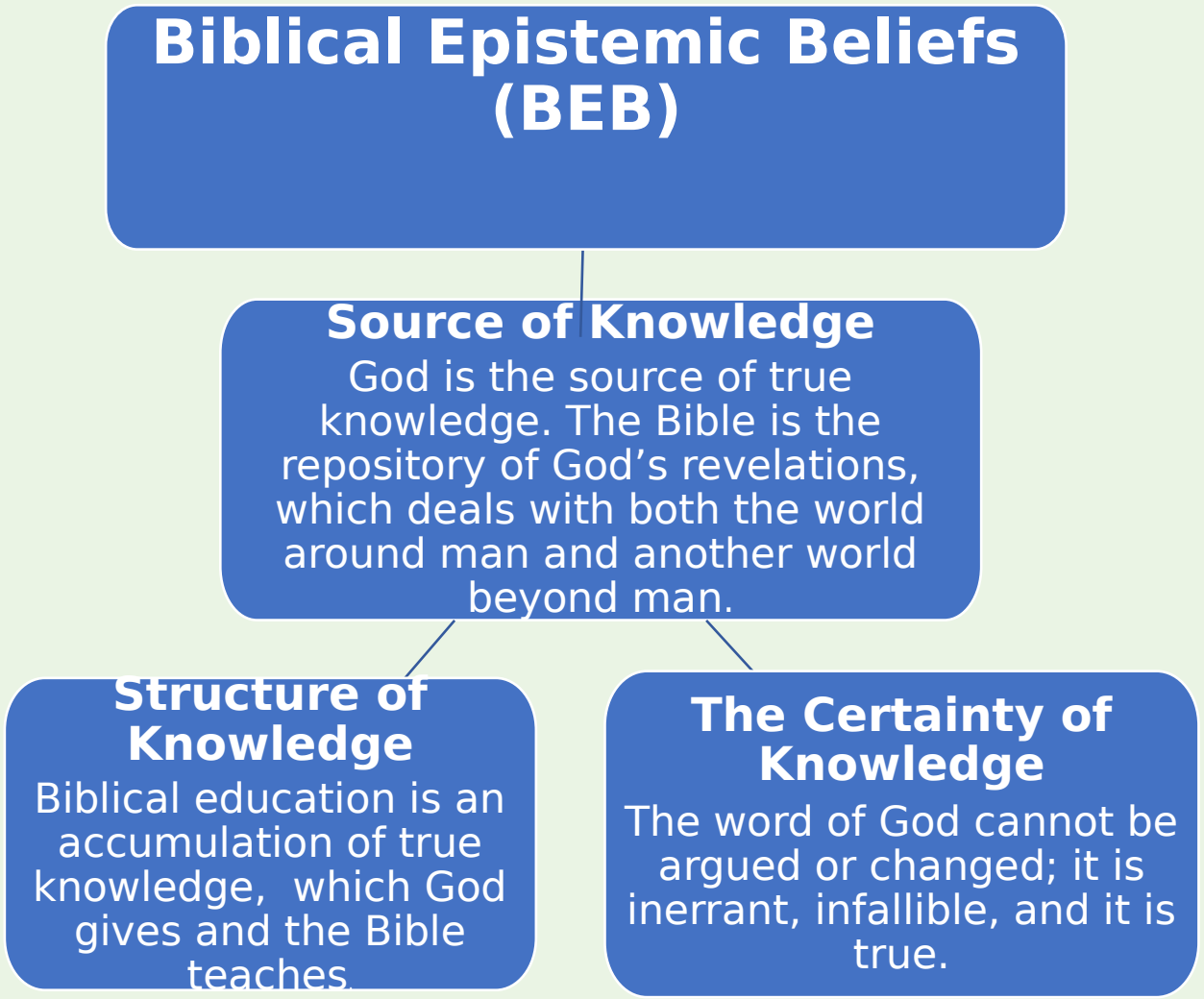
UNIT 5

RESEARCH AND BIBLICAL RESEARCH: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL INQUIRY

UNIT 5
RESEARCH AND BIBLICAL RESEARCH: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Research is an epistemological inquiry aimed at finding out the truth about a phenomenon to expand the frontiers of knowledge. This involves data gathering, data collation, and analysis of data to establish truths (facts) and reach accurate conclusion. In other words, research is an epistemological inquiry into the nature of a phenomenon aimed at discovering the truth or providing answers to problems. Epistemology is not merely about the acquisition of knowledge and not merely about understanding the process of knowledge acquisition but about intellectual or mental exploration to attain a level of knowledge that is true and acceptable. Biblical epistemology, therefore, is an intellectual enterprise aimed at attaining true wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of divine mysteries. Epistemological inquiry is an intellectual investigation aimed at understanding the world around us. But, in biblical research, epistemological inquiry is an intellectual exploration or investigation aimed at understanding both the world around us and another world

UNIT 5
RESEARCH AND BIBLICAL RESEARCH: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL INQUIRY– Cont'd



UNIT 5
RESEARCH AND BIBLICAL RESEARCH: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL INQUIRY– Cont'd

When we inquire, *we use biblical evidence to answer questions.* All researches operate at epistemological level but not all researches attain a level of knowledge that is true and acceptable. No successful research can be conducted without an epistemological assistance. Every research begins with epistemological inquiry (the use of intellectual faculties to ask questions about a phenomenon or problem). What this means is that epistemological inquiry is a curiosity to know, an investigative enterprise, a cognitive or intellectual response to a certain phenomenon in order to find out the truth, which normally begins with the question of "what?", "why?", "where?" "when?" or "how?" (WH). Epistemological inquiry is the use of mental faculty, cognitive power or prowess to gather data or information relevant for analysis to solve problems. Thus, research is an epistemological enquiry, a search for truth, information, or knowledge; it is an examination of facts, principles, or realities. This is biblically supported. For example, King Solomon says that: "And I applied myself by heart and mind to seek and search out by [human] wisdom all human activity under heaven. …" (Eccl 1:13, AMP). All our search for truth without the help of the Holy Spirit, who is the Truth and who teaches truth and guides believe into all truth (John 16:13), will lead to vanity (Eccl 1:14). The more we search for truth, by increasing our human knowledge and worldly wisdom, without the involvement of God the Spirit, the result of our efforts will be sorrow, pains, and failure (Eccl 1: 16-18). In other word, any application of scientific research approach or any kind of researc

Unit 6
BIBLICAL RESEARCH AS A SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Unit 6
BIBLICAL RESEARCH AS A SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Biblical research is a spiritual or theological inquiry. Biblical theological inquiry can be defined as the application of theological tools to the acquisition of Knowledge to discover biblical truth through the help of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, it is a spiritual inquiry because it involves the Holy Spirit. Since research is about truth, biblical research is nothing but the search for truth. And, since the Bible contains God's truth, research has a biblical root. What is biblical research? Biblical research can also be seen as a theological and epistemological enquiry or inquiry into the world around us and another world beyond us with the sole aim to know God's truth and way as established in the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit. *Biblical research is all about the truth of God. It is searching or looking for the truth and way of God in the Bible to establish a fact, solve a problem, interpret a phenomenon, and translate divine discovery into application. It is about discovering truth and truth begins with God, not humankind.* Biblical research leads to a deeper understanding of God's character and His laws, resulting in a more intimate acquaintance with God. Biblical research is both

Unit 6
BIBLICAL RESEARCH AS A SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY – Cont'd

All biblical researches centre on theological inquiry. What is theological inquiry? Theological inquiry deals with curiosity to know God, His nature and the universe in which He has created through His word to interpret phenomena or realities with the purpose of establishing the truth about God with the help of the Holy Spirit. Theological inquiry refers to the process of investigating and exploring questions related to theology, which is the study of God, religious beliefs, the nature of the divine, and the universe He has created. It deals with the realities around us and beyond us. This is done within the confine of the Bible. This is because the Bible is the only reliable, inerrant, and infallible source book to discover the truth. If we rely on opinion polls to confirm truth, we would run the risk of following the whims or caprices of the masses or of the group making the most noise. Opinion polls are not sure way of giving us the truth. The majority may be wrong at times. This kind of research may not be useful in Biblical Research

Unit 6
BIBLICAL RESEARCH AS A SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY – Cont'd

- Biblical Research is conducted with a purpose to:
- Discover divine truth
- Establish the divine truth
- Uncover the revelled hidden truth of God.
- Increase our knowledge of God
- Obey divine order
- Expand the frontiers of biblical and theological knowled

UNIT 7

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING BIBLICAL RESEARCH

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1. Truth is revelatory. Biblical research is an inquiry into divine revelation to uncover divine truth. The Holy Spirit is needed to understand the revelation of God to discover the truth (1Cor 2:14).
2. Truth is not based on logical reasoning or rationalism but on biblical facts, the word of God as typified in the Bible. Rationalism or reasoning power is not sufficient in biblical research. Therefore, it cannot be ultimately considered as the source of truth but can help to discover the truth if God is involved backed with faith.
3. Truth is a function of revelation. Man only search for the revelled hidden truth of God (Deut 29:29; Prov 2:4; 25: 2; Matt 13: 44). Until God reveals, no one can find. Successful research cannot be said to have been conducted if God does not reveal or involve.
4. Biblical research is a spiritual inquiry. It does not follow the tradition of men and science methodically or regimentally. All research findings are validated by the word of God. Research is regarded as quality and truth if it is founded on the word of God. Researchers receive revelation or truth through the written word of and living word of God.

UNIT 7

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING BIBLICAL RESEARCH - Cont'd

6. The chief concern of biblical research is God's Kingdom and His righteousness (Matt 6:33).
7. Research is relational. Revelation of truth is predicated on researcher's relationship with God (John 15:15; cf. Gen 18:17; James 2:3).
8. Extra-biblical evidence is not sufficient enough to establish the truth. It can only be used as a supportive and not as concrete evidence because it can be subjective.
9. The Bible is a research repository used as a single source of truth

UNIT 8:
THE SOURCES OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

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THE SOURCES OF BIBLICAL RESEARCH

The Sources of Biblical Research are listed here:

1. Primary Sources:

- The Bible/Scriptures (both the Old and New Testaments).
- Field sources, such as archaeological remains

2. Secondary Sources (library):

- Bible Atlas
- Concordance
- Bible Commentaries
- Bible Dictionaries
- Encyclopaedias
- Lexicon
- Journals
- Christian Books

Electronic Sources:

- Christian websites
- Christian online Journals

UNIT 8

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Tutor-Mark Assignment

(1.) In your own words, explain research. (2.) What is your understanding about biblical research? (3.) List five fundamental principles of biblical research.

Guidelines:

Each answer should range between 100-300 words

Your assignment should be typed on A4 paper size and send it to my email as an attachment

The deadline is a week from now

The first page of your assignment MUST include the following:

Your Full Name:..... Matriculation No.....

Course Title:..... Course Code: .....

Name of Your School:..... Course Lecturer: .....

Date:..... Dept./Level .....

“I may know many things but I do not know everything.”

Thanks for your rapt attention

Pastor (Dr) Dele Alaba Ilesanmi (OND, DDPIT, B.Ed., PGDE, PGDTh., PDGM., M.A., PhD, ThD), a Research Professor, specialises in Biblical Research, Theoretical Theology, Faith Theology, and Biblical Christian Education (the fields he is currently pioneering). He has developed some biblical theories and concepts, such *as Theogenesial Theory, Pneumagenesial Theory, Quantum Theory, Theory of Absolute Ownership-Creationism, Parabolic Differential Learning Theory, Supra-nationalistic Salvation Theory, Divino-Experiential Learning Theory, Divino-Constructivism, Continual Learning Theory, Theogogy, Pneumagogy, Christogogy, Bibliogogy, Bibliogogics, Homeogogy/Filiogogy,parentogogy (parento theory),* etc. As of 2025, he has over 100 publications to his credit, including ten books and Christian research articles published in different reputable and registered journals and academic platforms, etc. To connect with this astute author: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4874-0759 ; pstdeleilesanmi3@gmail.com; +234-08062197040.

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